

## §511.2

### §511.2 Nature of adjudicative proceedings.

Adjudicative proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with title 5, U.S.C., sections 551 through 559 and this part. It is the policy of the agency that adjudicative proceedings shall be conducted expeditiously and with due regard to the rights and interests of all persons affected, and to the public interest. Therefore, the presiding officer and all parties shall make every effort at each stage of a proceeding to avoid unnecessary delay.

### §511.3 Definitions.

(a) As used in this part:

(1) The term *application* means an *ex parte* request by a party for an order that may be granted or denied without opportunity for response by any other party.

(2) The term *NHTSA* means the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(3) The term *Administrator* means the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(4) The term *Complaint Counsel* means prosecuting counsel for the NHTSA.

(5) The term *motion* means a request by a party for a ruling or order that may be granted or denied only after opportunity for response by each affected party.

(6) The term *party* means the NHTSA, and any person named as a respondent in a proceeding governed by this part.

(7) The term *person* means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, public or private organization, or Federal, State or municipal governmental entity.

(8) The term *petition* means a written request, made by a person or a party and addressed to the Presiding Officer or the Administrator, that the addressee take some action.

(9) The term *Presiding Officer* means the person who conducts an adjudicative hearing under this part, who shall be an administrative law judge qualified under title 5, U.S.C., section 3105 and assigned by the Chief Administrative Law Judge, Office of Hearings, United States Department of Transportation.

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(10) The term *Respondent* means any person against whom a complaint has been issued.

(11) The term *Office of Hearings* means the Officer of Hearings, Department of Transportation.

(12) The term *staff* means the staff of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(13) The term *Chief Administrative Law Judge* means the Chief Administrative Law Judge of the Office of Hearings, Department of Transportation.

(14) The term *Docket Section* means the Docket Section, Office of the Secretary of Transportation.

[45 FR 81578, Dec. 11, 1980, as amended at 53 FR 15782, May 3, 1988]

### Subpart B—Pleadings; Form; Execution; Service of Documents

#### §511.11 Commencement of proceedings.

(a) *Notice of institution of an enforcement proceeding.* An adjudicative proceeding under this part is commenced by the issuance of a complaint by the NHTSA.

(b) *Form and content of complaint.* The complaint shall be signed by the Complaint Counsel and shall contain the following:

(1) Recital of the legal authority for instituting the proceeding, with specific designation of the statutory provisions involved in each allegation.

(2) Identification of each respondent.

(3) A clear and concise statement of the charges, sufficient to inform each respondent with reasonable definiteness of the factual basis of the allegations of violation. A list and summary of documentary evidence supporting the charges shall be attached.

(4) A statement of the civil penalty which the Complaint Counsel believes is in the public interest, or which is required by law. In the case of civil penalties assessed for violations of section 507(3) of the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act (15 U.S.C. 2007(3)), the amount of such penalty shall be calculated from the time of the alleged violation. In the case of civil penalties assessed for violations of section 507 (1) or (2) of that Act, any monetary credits available to offset those civil penalties shall be specified.

(5) The right of the respondent to a hearing on the alleged violations.

(c) *Notice to the public.* Once a complaint is issued, notice of it shall be immediately submitted to the FEDERAL REGISTER for publication. The notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER shall briefly describe the nature of the proceeding and state that petitions to participate in the proceeding must be filed no later than the first prehearing conference.

**§ 511.12 Answer.**

(a) *Time for filing.* A respondent shall have twenty (20) days after service of a complaint within which to file an answer.

(b) *Content of answer.* An answer shall conform to the following:

(1) *Request for hearing.* Respondent shall state whether it requests a full, adjudicatory hearing or whether it desires to proceed on the basis of written submissions. If a hearing is requested, respondent shall specify those issues on which a hearing is desired.

(2) *Contested allegations.* An answer in which the allegations of a complaint are contested shall contain:

(i) Specific admission or denial of each allegation in the complaint. If the respondent is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of an allegation, respondent shall so state. Such a statement shall have the effect of a denial. Denials shall fairly meet the substance of the allegations denied. Allegations not thus answered shall be deemed to have been admitted.

(ii) A concise statement of the factual and/or legal defenses to each allegation of the complaint.

(3) *Admitted allegations.* If the respondent admits or fails to deny any factual allegation, he or she shall be deemed to have waived a hearing as to such allegation.

(c) *Default.* Failure of the respondent to file an answer within the time provided (or within an extended time, if provided), shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of the right to appear and contest the allegations set forth in the complaint and to authorize the Presiding Officer to make such findings of fact as are reasonable under the circumstances.

**§ 511.13 Amendments and supplemental pleadings.**

Whenever determination of a controversy on the merits will be facilitated thereby, the Presiding Officer upon motion, may allow appropriate amendments and supplemental pleadings which do not unduly broaden the issues in the proceeding or cause undue delay.

**§ 511.14 Form and filing of documents.**

(a) *Filing.* Except as otherwise provided, all documents submitted to the Administrator or a Presiding Officer shall be filed with the Docket Section, Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation, Room 4107, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Documents may be filed in person or by mail and shall be deemed filed on the day of filing or mailing.

(b) *Caption.* Every document shall contain a caption setting forth the name of the action in connection with which it is filed, the docket number, and the title of the document.

(c) *Copies.* An original and nine (9) copies of all documents shall be filed. Documents may be reproduced by printing or any other process, provided that all copies filed are clear and legible.

(d) *Signature.* (1) The original of each document filed shall be signed by a representative of record for the party; or in the case of parties not represented, by the party; or by a partner, officer, or regular employee of any corporation, partnership, or association, who files an appearance on behalf of the party.

(2) The act of signing a document constitutes a representation by the signer that the signer has read it; that to the best of the signer's knowledge, information and belief, the statements made in it are true; and that it is not filed for purposes of delay.

[45 FR 81578, Dec. 11, 1980, as amended at 53 FR 15782, May 3, 1988]

**§ 511.15 Time.**

(a) *Computation.* In computing any period of time prescribed or allowed by the rules in this part, the day of the act, event, or default from which the designated period of time begins to run